

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 INR-07 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05

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O 010845Z SEP 76
FM USLO PEKING
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6294
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
CINCPAC FOR POLAD

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E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, TPHY, CH
SUBJECT: PEKING WELCOMES EARTHQUAKE RELIEF WORKERS

1. PEKING THIS AFTERNOON WELCOMED AS HEROES EARTHQUAKE RELIEF WORKERS. BEGINNING IN LATE MORNING, THE PEKING RAILWAY STATION WAS SEALED OFF BY PLA AND URBAN MILITIA DISPLAYING SPECIAL ID TAGS; BRIGHTLY COSTUMED CHILDREN ASSEMBLED AT THE STATION TO CHEER THE RETURNEES;
A LARGE BANNER WAS DISPLAYED READING "RESPECT THE HEROES FIGHTING ON THE FRONT LINE AGAINST THE EFFECTS OF THE EARTHQUAKE"; AND THE ROUTE FROM THE RAILWAY STATION ALONG CHANG AN STREET TO THE GREAT HALL OF THE PEOPLE WAS LINED EVERY FEW YARDS BY PLA, POLICE, AND URGAN MILITIA.

2. AT APPROXIMATELY 12:30 P.M. SOME 67 BUSES CARRYING 60 PASSENGERS-- PREDOMINANTLY PLA BUT INCLUDING SOME MAVY AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL-- PROCEEDED FROM THE RAILWAY STATION TO THE GREAT HALL. WITNESSED FROM STREETSIDE, THE ATMOSPHERE WITHIN THE BUSES WAS FESTIVE; SOME RIDERS WERE WEARING RED FLOWERS AND MANY APPEARED TO BE CHATTING ANIMATEDGPY

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3. BY 2:00 P.M. SOME 280 BUSES HAD ARRIVED IN FRONT OF THE GREAT HALL

;
ASSUMING ALL BUSES WERE FILLED, APPROXIMATELY 15,000 PERSONS MUST HAVE
ASSEMBLED INSIDE FOR THE MEETING. THE ROAD IN FRONT OF THE WESTERN FA
CADE
OF THE GREAT HALL WAS CLOSED TO TRAFFIC, BUT NO CROWDS WERE
OBSERVED EITHER INSIDE TIEN AN MEN SQUARE OR ALONG CHANG AN STREET.

4. AN EMBASSY WAS TOLD BY ONE OF ITS LOCALS THAT THE "TANGSHAN HEROES

"
WERE TO BE RECEIVED BY UNSPECIFIED "NATIONAL LEADERS." WE PRESUME THAT
THE MILITARY COMMISSION MAY HAVE ARRANGED THIS AFFAIR AND THAT PREMIER
HUA MIGHT PERSONALLY HAVE PRESIDED OVER A COMMENDATION CEREMONY.

5. A FULL ACCOUNT OF THE PROCEEDINGS WILL LIKELY BE BROADCAST OVER
PEKING RADIO THIS EVENING AND FRONT-PAGED IN TOMORROW'S EDITION OF
PEOPLE'S DAILY.

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